



ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC: SOLUTION OR COMPETITOR?

Pamela A. Lemoine¹ | Kimberly McElveen² | Thomas J. McCormack² | Robert E. Waller² |

*Michael D. Richardson³

¹Troy University

²Columbus State University

³Global Tertiary Institute (*Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

In the 21st century higher education faces the COVID-19 global pandemic as a significant impediment to continued growth and development. The focus of society in the 21st century is knowledge-based: learning is critical, and information continually become obsolete. The pandemic forced the closing of face-to-face higher education around the world. However, online learning became the immediate solution used by most universities. Online education was quickly acknowledged as the solution to allow global institutions to continue instruction. Neither faculty nor students were sufficiently prepared for the rapid move to online but adapted quickly.

KEYWORDS: Online learning, online teaching, global higher education, COVID-19 pandemic.

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 pandemic forced almost all global higher education institutions to modify traditional pedagogy and accommodate technology-mediated learning, primarily online learning (Ali, 2020). Although online learning adds complexity and uncertainty for global higher education, online technology provides a service and guide for current and future learning (Waller, Lemoine, Garretson, & Richardson, 2020). The accelerating pace of change demanded from COVID-19 requires online learning which includes more flexible, adaptive, and agile teaching and learning in global higher education institutions (Tartavulea, Albu, Albu, Dieaconescu, & Petre, 2020). Online learning is an important means of changing teaching and learning in order to successfully continue instruction for students (Bhowmik & Bhattacharya, 2021).

COVID-19:

The COVID-19 crisis continues to present challenges for higher education institutions. Global colleges and universities responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with varying strategies (Bao, 2020). Institutions were forced to quickly make decisions to protect their campus communities, while consequently changing their entire methods of instruction (Williamson, Eynon, & Potter, 2020). Issues associated with COVID-19 on higher education campuses included online learning techniques, student health and wellbeing, financial constraints, and staff and faculty safety (Garretson, McCormack, Waller, Lemoine, & Richardson, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced global higher education institutions to shift rapidly to online learning. UNESCO declared an international state of emergency and online learning because the best option for continued learning (Naciri, Baba, Achbani, & Kharbach, 2020). Online learning is not new to most learners; however, COVID-19 revived the need to adopt online teaching and learning opportunities (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2021). Online learning is an important source for continuation of instruction due to its ubiquity (availability anywhere and anytime), low cost, ease of use and interactive character (Karalis & Raikou, 2020).

Online learning also has also presented issues for students and faculty (Neuwirth, Jović & Mukherji, 2020). Authors of one study reported that some of the problems with online learning included: (1) technological factors, (2) online learning system quality factors, (3) trust factors, (4) self-efficacy factors and (5) cultural aspects (Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh, & Althunibat, 2020).

COVID-19 AND ONLINE LEARNING:

The digital economy offers opportunity and markets for global higher education institutions who can adapt and modify learning opportunities, thereby creating wider access to a global marketplace. Two major world changes, moving from a manufacturing-based economy to an information-based economy and the globalization of higher education have led to many innovations in educational teaching and learning (Waller, Lemoine, Garretson, & Richardson, 2021). In recent years nothing has affected global higher education as profoundly as the use of technology for teaching and learning (Smidt & Li, 2019).

New technologies, especially the Web 2.0, virtual and social networking tools, enabled a phenomenon of participative and shared learning (Singh & Atwal, 2020). New technologies are creating learning environments to increase the number of students impacted and the quality of those services and is currently under-

going great transformation (Palahicky, 2020). The nature of teaching within the global higher education system is evolving rapidly due to the accessible advanced technology, the use of online learning, student flexible learning expectations, the pressures of budget constraints, and the COVID-19 pandemic (McCormack, Lemoine, Waller, & Richardson, 2021).

The rapid onset of the pandemic forced educational administrators and academics to critically and rapidly identify different techniques for delivering information to students. Utilizing digital and online resources has become key in increasing student engagement and, subsequently, achievement even in COVID times (Cresswell-Yeager, Aucoin, & Budenz, 2021; Whiter, 2020). It also assumes relatively even levels of comfort with both teaching and learning in online spaces. Faculty are looking for digital tools to deliver learning materials to their students and organize communication within their classes. (Anderson, Bushey, Devlin, & Gould, 2020). No managerial strategies, no teacher training, no debates on technological design or politics, no arguments about the pros and cons—faculty just do it (Albrahim, 2020).

TEACHING AND ONLINE LEARNING:

The 21st century has presented major challenges to all educational entities and organizations around the world due to numerous issues, primarily financial concerns and student performance trepidations. Much time, money, and attention has been accorded to the effective use of online learning and teaching in global higher education. As a result, there is evidence that online learning positively impacts student academic achievement; however, there is also evidence that higher education faculty are not taking advantage of online learning as much as possible, but COVID-19 changed all of that (Huang, Thili, Chang, Zhang, Nascimbeni, & Burgos, 2020).

Global higher education institutions face a number of opportunities and challenges as the result of a digital technology revolution, none as daunting as response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the immediacy of online learning (Yan, 2020). There has been some reluctance to adopt new types of technology as a teaching tool by faculty in institutions of higher education, but the pandemic forced immediate adoption of online learning whether faculty were ready or not (Gratz & Looney, 2020). Online learning methods have played a key role in allowing university education to continue—despite the current uncertainty concerning the ultimate duration of the crisis, and the challenges posed by the virus (Orakci, 2020).

Faculty must prepare students to be able to find the information they need and the knowledge of how to analyze appropriately and not just to regurgitate facts as often happened in the past. Online educators are teaching students how to live successfully in a future that is increasingly ambiguous and fast-paced (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020). In addition, faculty must remain "fully aware that education is much more than an efficient delivery of information" (Gangadharbatla, 2020, p. 75).

Incorporation of online teaching methodologies has become imperative for global higher education pedagogies during this time of COVID (de Fátima Goulão, 2020). Online teaching has become a vital prerequisite to create virtual learning environments in the curriculum so as to survive in the COVID world

(Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh, & Althunibat, 2020). Faculty are expected to not only teach students the information and skills that they need to know, but they must also teach them to be able to learn from and synthesize the vast amounts of information that are available to them in the digital world (Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia, & Koole, 2020).

Online learning is the fastest growing areas of education worldwide (He, Xu, & Kruck, 2019). Online teaching requires different pedagogical approaches; therefore, institutions need to support teachers transitioning into online teaching to ensure quality (Sortino, Winnington, & Cresswell-Yeager, 2020). Online education requires knowledge of current technological resources, use of innovative tools for instruction, and time to produce and place these tools within the learning management system (Mallillin, Mallillin, Carag, Collado, & Largo, 2020). Understanding faculty pedagogical practices and student experiences in online courses is an important area to consider because online teaching supports student engagement and success, which are critical because online students are more vulnerable to attrition (Lockman & Schirmer, 2020). Multiple instructional methods need to be used to increase the effectiveness of the online educational process and compensate for the lack of physical presence of both teachers and students in the same space and time (Lemoine, McElveen, Waller, & Richardson, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS:

- (1) The global digital economy offers opportunity and markets for institutions who can adapt to and access a global marketplace using online learning.
- (2) Online learning is much more to do with an approach to learning than simply a set of technological skills.
- (3) The educator's role is particularly important in fostering learning, especially when utilizing online learning.
- (4) The forced switch to online teaching caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic brought about disruptions in the educational process in universities around the world.
- (5) What will be the role of online learning after the pandemic? A future yet untold.

REFERENCES:

- I. Albrahim, F. A. (2020). Online teaching skills and competencies. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET*, 19(1), 9-20.
- II. Ali, W. (2020). Online and remote learning in higher education institutes: A necessity in light of COVID-19 pandemic. *Higher Education*, 10(3).
- III. Almaiah, M. A., Al-Khasawneh, A., & Althunibat, A. (2020). Exploring the critical challenges and factors influencing the E-learning system usage during COVID-19 pandemic. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25, 5261-5280.
- IV. Anderson, J., Bushey, H., Devlin, M. E., & Gould, A. J. (2020). Cultivating student engagement in a personalized online learning environment. In *Handbook of research on fostering student engagement with instructional technology in higher education* (pp. 267-287). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- V. Bao, W. (2020). COVID 19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(2), 113-115.
- VI. Bhowmik, S., & Bhattacharya, M. D. (2021). Factors influencing online learning in higher education in the emergency shifts of COVID-19. *The Online Journal of Distance Education and e-Learning*, 9(1).
- VII. Cresswell-Yeager, T. J., Aucoin, J., & Budenz, D. (2021). A framework for student engagement: strategies for faculty teaching online. In *Research anthology on developing effective online learning courses* (pp. 372-390). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- VIII. de Fátima Goulão, M. (2020). Online learning environments and some pedagogical implications. *European Journal of Teaching and Education*, 2(2), 35-44.
- IX. Gangadharbatla, H. (2020). What we stand to lose with fully online advertising education. *Journal of Advertising Education*, 24(1), 74-80.
- X. Garretson, C. J., McCormack, T. J., Waller, R. E., Lemoine, P. A., & Richardson, M. D. (2021). The impact of turbulence on global higher education during a pandemic. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies*, 8(1), 30-35.
- XI. Gratz, E., & Looney, L. (2020). Faculty resistance to change: An examination of motivators and barriers to teaching online in higher education. *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (IJOPCD)*, 10(1), 1-14.
- XII. He, W., Xu, G., & Kruck, S. E. (2019). Online IS education for the 21st century. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 25(2), 1.
- XIII. Huang, R., Tili, A., Chang, T. W., Zhang, X., Nascimbeni, F., & Burgos, D. (2020). Disrupted classes, undisrupted learning during COVID-19 outbreak in China: Application of open educational practices and resources. *Smart Learning Environments*, 7(1), 1-15.
- XIV. Karalis, T., & Raikou, N. (2020). Teaching at the times of COVID-19: Inferences and implications for higher education pedagogy. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(5), 479-493.
- XV. Lemoine, P. A., McElveen, J. P., Waller, R. E., & Richardson, M. D. (2021). Is online learning the future of global higher education? The implications from a global pandemic. In *Advancing online course design and pedagogy for the 21st century learning environment* (pp. 28-44). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XVI. Lockman, A. S., & Schirmer, B. R. (2020). Online instruction in higher education: Promising, research-based, and evidence-based practices. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, 7(2), 130-152.
- XVII. Mallillin, L. L. D., Mallillin, J. B., Carag, E. A., Collado, J. B., & Largo, M. G. D. (2020). A framework in online learning process: A guide to educational teaching during COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies*, 5(2).
- XVIII. McCormack, T. J., Lemoine, P. A., Waller, R. E., & Richardson, M. D. (2021). Global higher education: Examining response to the COVID-19 Pandemic using agility and adaptability. *Journal of Education and Development*, 5(1), 10.
- XIX. Naciri, A., Baba, M. A., Achbani, A., & Kharbach, A. (2020). Mobile learning in Higher education: Unavoidable alternative during COVID-19. *Aquademia*, 4(1), ep20016.
- XX. Neuwirth, L. S., Jović, S., & Mukherji, B. R. (2020). Reimagining higher education during and post-COVID-19: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 1477971420947738.
- XXI. Orakci, Ş. (2020). The future of online learning and teaching in higher education. In *Global approaches to sustainability through learning and education* (pp. 28-45). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXII. Palahicky, V. (2020). The impact of technology innovation on the undergraduate learner: A critical perspective. In *Enhancing learning design for innovative teaching in higher education* (pp. 266-280). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXIII. Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2021). Online education and the COVID-19 outbreak: A case study of online teaching during lockdown. *Education Sciences*, 11(2), 72.
- XXIV. Perrotta, K. A., & Bohan, C. H. (2020). A reflective study of online faculty teaching experiences in higher education. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, 3(1), 50-66.
- XXV. Rapanta, C., Botturi, L., Goodyear, P., Guàrdia, L., & Koole, M. (2020). Online university teaching during and after the Covid-19 crisis: Refocusing teacher presence and learning activity. *Postdigital Science and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00155-y>
- XXVI. Singh, Y., & Atwal, H. (2020). Changing the DNA of higher education through innovative approaches. In *Enhancing learning design for innovative teaching in higher education* (pp. 296-305). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXVII. Smidt, E., & Li, R. (2019). *Ensuring quality and integrity in online learning programs*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXVIII. Sortino, M., Winnington, J., & Cresswell-Yeager, T. J. (2020). Comprehensive faculty development: An innovative approach in online education. In *Handbook of research on creating meaningful experiences in online courses* (pp. 25-36). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXIX. Tartavulea, C. V., Albu, C. N., Albu, N., Dieaconescu, R. I., & Petre, S. (2020). Online teaching practices and the effectiveness of the educational process in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 22(55), 920-936.
- XXX. Waller, R. E., Lemoine, P. A., Garretson, C. J., & Richardson, M. D. (2020). Global higher education: Complexity and uncertainty. *International Education and Research Journal*, 6(4), 57-58.
- XXXI. Waller, R. E., Lemoine, P. A., Garretson, C. J., & Richardson, M. D. (2021). Disruption and innovation in global higher education as viewed through the lens of complexity theory. In *Handbook of research on modern educational technologies, applications, and management* (pp. 677-700). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXXII. Whiter, K. A. (2020). Strategies for engaging students in the online environment. In *Handbook of research on fostering student engagement with instructional technology in higher education* (pp. 305-326). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- XXXIII. Williamson, B., Eynon, R., & Potter, J. (2020). Pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices: Digital technologies and distance education during the coronavirus emergency. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 45(2), 107-114.
- XXXIV. Yan, Z. (2020). Unprecedented pandemic, unprecedented shift, and unprecedented opportunity. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2, 110-112.